



STATE OF MARYLAND

DHMH

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

201 W. Preston Street • Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Martin O'Malley, Governor – Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor – Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D., Secretary

*** * * Fact Sheet * * ***

Health Tips – After the Storm

The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene officials remind Maryland residents about the following hurricane or disaster survival TIPS:

Time to clean up

- Clean surfaces with soap, water and disinfectant to avoid the growth of mold.
 - Be particularly careful of surfaces that may come in contact with food (i.e. counter tops);
 - Areas where children play should be carefully cleaned;
- Wash linens and clothing in hot water or dry clean them;
- Air dry and spray thoroughly with a disinfectant any items that cannot be washed or dry cleaned (i.e., mattresses and furniture);
- Steam-clean all carpeting;
- Wear rubber gloves and boots when cleaning up sewage backs up; and
- Remove and discard all contaminated household materials that cannot be disinfected (i.e., rugs, wall coverings, drywall, etc.).

Immunizations

- Contact your health care provider or local health department to determine whether a tetanus booster is necessary if you have a puncture wound or a wound contaminated with feces, soil, or saliva.

Precautions when returning to your home

- When using a generator to provide power to your home, be sure that the generator is outside, located at least 20-25 feet from the dwelling away from windows, doors and vents and allow for adequate ventilation;
- Stay away from downed or dangling power lines;
- Assume all power lines are 'live';
- Report downed or dangling power lines to BGE or PEPCO immediately;
- Leave your house immediately and call 911 if you smell gas or suspect a gas leak;
- Empty standing water found in or around the yard in items such as flowerpots, tires, wading pools, gutters, and water containers for pets and other wildlife;

- Large amounts of pooled water that remain after a flood will lead to an increase in the mosquito population; and
- Avoid activity near standing water, wear long-sleeved and long-legged clothing, and use insect repellants containing DEET according to the instructions.

Sanitation and Hygiene

- Remember to practice basic hygiene;
- Wash your hands with soap and water – always;
- Keep open cuts or sores as clean as possible by washing with soap and water to control potential infections;
 - Flood waters may contain fecal matter from overflowing sewage systems and industrial byproducts;
 - There is a risk of disease from eating or drinking anything contaminated with flood water;
- Seek immediate medical attention if you have a wound that develops redness, swelling, or drainage;
- Keep children away from and do not allow them to play in flood water areas -- both to prevent drowning and other health issues;
- Wash children's hands frequently; and
- Disinfect all contaminated toys before allowing children to play with them.

The DHMH Office of Food Protection and Consumer Health Services also recommends the following food safety tips for residents that lost power and experienced flooding:

- Perishable foods without refrigeration that have a temperature of 40° Fahrenheit and above for two hours should be discarded; this includes meats, milk, yogurt, eggs, mayonnaise and cream dressings, pastas, and desserts.
- Food items that can be kept for a *limited time* without refrigeration include: hard process cheeses (Cheddar, Swiss, Provolone, Romano and Parmesan); Butter and Margarine; Opened canned fruits and fruit juices; Peanut butter, jellies, jams; Mustard and vinegar-based dressings; Bread products like rolls, muffins, bagels, waffles; and herbs, spices and raw vegetables.
- Discard all foods that are exposed to flood waters **including canned goods**. Thoroughly wash all kitchen utensils, pots, plates, etc., after contact with flood water with hot soapy water and sanitize them by boiling in clean water or immersing them in a solution of 1 teaspoon of chlorine bleach per quart of water for 15 minutes.
- When discarding spoiled foods place them in double plastic bags closed with ties. Place in animal-and bird-proof trash cans.
- As a rule—an unopened, well functioning freezer half full will keep foods safely for up to 24 hours. A fully stocked freezer, unopened can keep foods safely for 48 hours.
- Use common sense when dealing with the issue of possible food spoilage.
- Do not taste foods to see if they are spoiled --- **If in doubt throw it out.**

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Web Site: www.dhmm.maryland.gov